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Les relations de défense et de sécurité entre Israël et l'Union Européenne (UE) en vue du Printemps Arabe

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- 1 The relations between Israel and the EU, since their establishment in 1959 with the EEC (European Economic Community), are characterized as exceptionally ambiguous. In fact, over the years Israel and the EU have established a large scale of economic, commercial, scientific and cultural cooperation on the one hand but have developed deep political and security disagreements on the other hand. Concurrently the EU member states and Israel have built up significant defense and security cooperation. However, the defense and security cooperation between Israel and the EU has remained rather limited. The security and defense relations have known ups and downs. They suffered setbacks during periods of Israeli-Palestinian military conflicts, such as following the outburst of the Second Intifada (2000), the Second Lebanese War (2006) or following Operation Cast Lead in the Gaza Strip (2008). However, the process of the strengthening of defense and security cooperation has continued essentially as a result of shared strategic concerns such as the terrorist threats and the Iranian nuclear project.¹
- 2 The upheaval in the Arab world, which has started in 2011, added some more aspects to the already complex Israel-EU relations. Israeli and EU's opinions have initially diverged over their assessment of the geostrategic ramifications of the so called Arab Spring. Thus, while the EU has stressed the potential positive emergence of democratic regimes as a result of the revolutionary events in the region,² Israel has underlined the more realistic prospects of enduring instability, at least in the short and medium terms. Concurrently with the basic differences in their stances vis-à-vis the upheaval in the region, Israel and the EU also share growing security concerns resulting in defense cooperation.

- 3 This article focuses on Israel-EU security and defense relations in the context of the “Arab Spring”. It starts by presenting some major Israel-EU security and defense perceptions and factors which have shaped Israel-EU defense and security relations before the “Arab Spring” and examines the impact on these relations in the context of the “Arab Spring”. It displays the divergences and convergences over issues related to the “Arab Spring” such as the Israeli Palestinian conflict, the Hamas, Egypt’s revolutionary events, the Syrian Civil war, Lebanon and Hezbollah and the Iranian nuclear project. It goes on to briefly highlight some main areas of defense and security cooperation between Israel and the EU as well the bilateral defense cooperation between Israel and the EU member states. It concludes with some prospects and recommendations for the future.

Israel-EU Divergences and Convergences

The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

- 4 The major factor which has shaped Israel-EU relations in general and specifically its security and defense cooperation relates to the substantial disagreements over the issue of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Basically, already before the “Arab Spring” the EU has asserted that the solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict consists of the creation of a viable Palestinian state living in peace with Israel within the 1967 borders with slight negotiated territorial exchanges and with East Jerusalem as its capital. The EU has claimed that this solution would guarantee Israel’s security.³ The EU has often emphasized its strategic high priority interest in the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Following the upheaval in the region the EU has accentuated its warnings regarding the urgency of the resolution of the conflict, which the EU perceives as an essential part in addressing the region’s instability. That is evident, for instance, from a policy statement on the EU official External Action Service (EEAS): “Resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict is a strategic priority for Europe. Until this is achieved, there will be little chance of solving other problems in the Middle East”.⁴ The EU’s point of view regarding the urgency of the solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in view of the “Arab awakening” is evident in the speech of Catherine Ashton, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, in June 2012: “I have been very clear from the beginning of the Arab awakening that developments in the region make the peace process and a negotiated solution even more urgent and important, not less. While we are all paying a lot of attention to the situation in Syria, Egypt and elsewhere, ending the conflict remains a top priority and a fundamental EU interest. As for Israel the main source of concern remains the repercussions of the Arab Spring in its direct neighborhood”.⁵
- 5 In addition, the EU has argued consistently before and after the “Arab Spring” that the Israeli settlements in Judea and Samaria are illegal under international law. The EU has defined the settlements as its key concern and has often condemned Israeli decisions to expand them stressing that they constitute an impediment to the realization of the two states solution. Following the peace initiative of US Secretary of State John Kerry the EU has multiplied its condemning statements, warning that the settlements could undermine the ongoing negotiations.⁶
- 6 Israel, while declaring that it also supports the two-state solution, is skeptical regarding the sincerity of the Palestinian Authority as well as its capacity to create a peaceful state

alongside Israel. Thus, Israel has criticized the worrisome phenomena of anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic incitement within the Palestinian Authority. Israel perceives the anti-Israeli indoctrination, manifested in the Palestinian Authority textbooks, its formal media and its worship of jihadists and terrorists, as a factor which encourages terror acts against Israeli citizens.⁷

- 7 Israel also disagrees with the EU perception regarding the urgency of the solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a result of the current upheaval in the region. Israel claims that despite the importance of the Israeli Palestinian conflict, there is no linkage between the Israeli-Palestinian dispute and the current instability in the Middle East, which is caused by internal economic and political factors.⁸ Consequently Israel has evoked the need to exercise prudence in view of its hostile, unstable strategic environment as well as the tangible risk that extreme Muslim groups gain control of Arab states.⁹
- 8 Accordingly, Israel ascribes more importance to the concept that the two-state solution should include defense guarantees such as the demilitarization of the future Palestinian state. Additionally, Israel regards the concept of maintaining defensible borders as crucial for preserving its capacity for self defense as well as attaining a lasting peace agreement in the future.¹⁰
- 9 In this context, Israel perceives territorial continuity, especially between Maaleh Adumim and Jerusalem and hence the building in the controversial E1 zone, as an essential security measure, since it connects Maaleh Adumim to Jerusalem and ensures secure access to the strategic Jordan River Valley.¹¹ In addition, legal reports of Israeli and non Israeli jurists claim that the settlements are compatible with international law.¹² A commission, appointed by Israeli government and headed by former supreme court judge Edmond Levy, states that the settlements are legal under international law. It criticizes, however, the unauthorized outposts.¹³ Furthermore, Israel argues that there is no connection between the settlements and the peace agreements. Hence, the settlements were not an obstacle for peace with Egypt or Jordan. Additionally, Israel emphasizes that even though it has evacuated settlements in Gaza it was retaliated by rockets. Israel also claims, in contrast to the EU, that the main obstacle to the resolution of the conflict is the refusal of the Palestinians to recognize Israel as a Jewish state and not the settlements.¹⁴ Israel has gone even further and accused the EU as being one sided in its criticism of Israeli settlements while ignoring the unilateral steps of the Palestinian Authority such as its appeal on April 1st, 2014 to join 15 international institutions thus breaching former understandings.¹⁵
- 10 No wonder that Israel-EU relations have recently undergone some crises reflecting to a great extent their opposing perceptions regarding the settlements. On November-December 2012 a significant crisis occurred on the backdrop of the UN General Assembly vote, which granted the Palestinian Authority a non-member observer state status with the support of most EU members. The Israeli government has subsequently authorized the building of 3,000 houses in the E1 zone, which links Maaleh Adumim and Jerusalem. The decision drew EU harsh criticism and some members even raised the option of recalling their ambassadors.¹⁶
- 11 A more serious crisis occurred in July 2013, when the EU has published its policy guidelines for labeling the settlements products. The guidelines included the banning of cooperation with Israeli institutions operating in the settlements. The proposed guidelines also stipulated that any new agreement with Israel, such as "Horizon 2020" which is the EU program for innovative research and development, should include Israel's

statements that the Jewish communities in the West Bank and the Golan Heights are not part of Israel and therefore are not covered by the new agreements.¹⁷ Israel has rejected the European new guidelines insisting that the EU interferes on issues which belong to the Israeli-Palestinian negotiation table, and that Israel's borders will not be determined by the European Commission guidelines but by negotiations between the concerned parties.¹⁸ The Israeli-EU guidelines crisis was temporarily contained after the U.S. requested the EU to delay its decision to label products from Israeli settlements so as not to harm US Secretary of State John Kerry's efforts to revive the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.¹⁹ In addition both the EU and Israel have expressed their willingness to find a solution which would enable Israel to join the Horizon 2020 program, in accordance with the interests of both sides.²⁰ Thus, Israel is interested in the prospects of the lucrative investments in its scientific research and development projects while the EU is interested in Israeli high-technology capabilities.

Hammas

- 12 Israel's use of force against terrorist organizations such as Hamas in Gaza, which targets Israel's civilian population with missiles, has repeatedly constituted a point of contention between Israel and the EU. During operation Cast Lead in winter 2008 /2009 the EU criticized Israel even though it expressed its support for Israel's right for self-defense. For instance, French president Nicolas Sarkozy, during the French EU presidency, labeled disproportionate the operation as soon as it started.²¹
- 13 During the period which preceded the Israeli Defense Pillar in Gaza, a period marked by persistent firing of missiles by Hamas, the EU expressed its commitment to Israel's security: "The EU remains unequivocally committed to the security of Israel, including with regard to vital threats in the region. We condemn all forms of violence against civilians, including rocket attacks from Gaza."²² Furthermore, the EU relatively moderated its criticism of Israeli operation Defense Pillar on November 2012 stressing Israel's right to protect its population from the rockets fired by the Hamas. The EU, however, urged Israel "to ensure that its response is proportionate".²³
- 14 Another point of divergence relates to the EU often pronounced demand from Israel to remove its blockade on the Gaza strip claiming that it violates international law. Israel regards the blockade on Gaza as a top security issue intended to prevent Hamas intensive smuggling of weapons. Israel argues that the Gaza blockade is compatible with international law, since Israel enables a constant supply of goods to the civil population, except for war materials.²⁴
- 15 The emerging reconciliation between the Palestinian authority and the Hamas in Gaza has created a new European-Israeli bone of contention. Thus, the EU, which has underlined on numerous occasions in the past that such reconciliation would constitute an important contribution to the Palestinian state building, has welcomed the reconciliation on condition that the Hamas adheres to three requirements: recognition of Israel's right to exist, renouncing terror and abiding by the agreements signed between Israel and the Palestinian authority.²⁵
- 16 The EU also urged for the continuation of the Israeli-Palestinian talks despite the PA-Hamas reconciliation deal. Israel, in contrast to the EU, regards this deal as a game changer, stressing that amid the talks with Israel, Abu-Mazen has reached an agreement

with the Hamas, a terrorist organization whose covenant calls for the destruction of Israel.²⁶

Egypt

- 17 The revolutionary events in Egypt, resulting in the ousting of President Hosni Mubarak in February 2011 triggered the election of Mohamed Morsi as the President of Egypt on June 2012. Morsi was toppled in a military “coup d’Etat” following mass manifestations as a result of Egyptian public resentment regarding Morsi’s endeavors to impose an Islamic constitution as well as regarding the deteriorating economy and security in Egypt. Both Israel and the EU are concerned about the tumultuous events in Egypt. The EU, on numerous occasions, has expressed its concerns regarding the turmoil which might jeopardize the establishment of a democratic regime in Egypt.²⁷
- 18 In Israel, concerns focus mainly on the ominous repercussions of the Egyptian upheaval on its immediate security. Thus, the weakening of the Egyptian grip over Sinai led to the strengthening of the extremist Muslim groups there. In fact, before the toppling of Morsi, Hamas has profited of the turmoil in Egypt as well as the favorable attitudes of Mohamed Morsi’s Muslim Brotherhood government in order to smuggle weapons, missiles and other commodities through tunnels in the Sinai to the Gaza strip. The Hamas’ activists have also benefited of the jihadist infrastructure in Sinai to carry out missile attacks against Israel as for example the rocket attack on Eilat on April 17, 2013. Indeed, the ousting of Morsi, the closing of numerous smuggling tunnels and the crackdown of the Sissi regime on the Islamists in Sinai have weakened the Hamas. However, Israel is currently concerned that the Hamas, being pushed into the corner, might resume its terror attacks on Israel.²⁸ These concerns seem to become more tangible with the recent missiles attacks against Israeli territory as well as the exposure of the three Hamas terror tunnels in Israeli territory during 2013 as well as on March 2014.²⁹

Syria

- 19 A major security concern to both Israel and the EU resides in the escalation of the civil war in Syria and its enormous humanitarian crisis. In addition, the situation in Syria constitutes a common concern to Israel as well as to the EU due the involvement of Al Qaeda affiliated terrorist groups in the civil war.³⁰ Furthermore, both Israel and the EU are concerned by the possible spillover of the crisis into bordering countries (Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Turkey and Israel) since it risks to turn the crisis into a regional or even global conflict, mainly as result of the military involvement of Hezbollah and Iran in the conflict. The EU is equally concerned by the spillover of the Syrian conflict into the EU member states as evident from the phenomena of western youngsters joining the ranks of Al-Qaeda affiliated rebels in Syria.³¹
- 20 Despite the shared security concerns, Israel and the EU have shaped different perceptions and positions regarding the Syrian civil war. The EU, in contrast to Israel has overtly expressed its support for the Syrian opposition. Following the violent repression of the anti government protests the EU imposed an embargo on arms and oil exports to and from Syria. Additionally, the EU has suspended its association agreement with Syria.³² The EU has also provided humanitarian, economic and diplomatic support to the opposition. On November 2012 The EU has even recognized the National Coalition as the “legitimate

representatives of the aspirations of the Syrian people".³³ At the same time, however, the EU has firmly opposed any military intervention such as imposing a no-fly zone without the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) mandate.

- 21 On May 2013 the issue of renewing the arms embargo on Syria seriously divided the EU. France and Britain have tried in vain to convince the other EU member states to lift the arms embargo and deliver weapons to the opposition with the purpose of ending the stalemate. They have claimed that this should be done with caution in order to prevent arms from falling into the hands of Al-Qaeda affiliated factions such as Jabhat al-Nusra.³⁴
- 22 A slight hardening in the tone of the EU occurred on August 21, 2013 following the murderous chemical attacks of the Assad regime against its citizens. The EU called on the UN Security Council to intervene against the Assad regime. It opposed, however, French declared willingness to join the US in a military intervention against the Assad regime. Subsequently, the EU embraced the Russian diplomatic intervention which led to Assad's formal agreement to give up his chemical arsenal despite the vagueness of its full implementation.³⁵
- 23 Israel's reaction to the Syrian crisis is different from that of the EU. Since the outbreak of the Syrian civil war, Israel has declared that it did not intend to intervene on behalf of one of the sides in Syria. Israel has stressed, however, that it would intervene only to stop the shipments of Iranian game changing advanced arms to Hezbollah. In fact, the smuggling of arms to Hezbollah, which is forbidden by UNSC decision 1701 (2006), is considered as an immense threat to Israel's security. That was the reason behind Israel's air raids against Syrians convoys of missiles designated to be delivered to the Hezbollah. In view of Syrian threats over Israel's air strike and the incidents of spillover of the Syrian civil war into Israeli territory, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has clarified: "Israel won't intervene in Syria if not targeted".³⁶ Defense Minister Yaalon reacted similarly on the lethal mass killing of Syrians by chemical arms and US declared intention to militarily intervene in Syria: "We aren't getting involved in what is happening in Syria... we aren't supporting or involved in a possible strike".³⁷ It is to be noted that the EU in its reaction to the Israeli strike in Syria has not revealed any understanding for the Israeli concerns regarding the transfer of advanced missiles to the Hezbollah. Thus, Ashton's spokesman, Michael Mann expressed the EU formal disapproval for the Israeli strike: "We are looking with great concern at the recent developments in and around Syria that risk dragging the region into an increasingly violent and expanding conflict".³⁸

Lebanon and Hezbollah

- 24 The spillover of the Syrian civil war into Lebanon created a common point of concern to the EU and to Israel. The participation of Hezbollah in the war on the side of Assad in the repression of the opposition forces has created a rift within the ranges of Hezbollah itself as well as among its Shiites supporters.³⁹ Hezbollah's involvement in the war in Syria also caused armed clashes between Sunni activists and the Hezbollah. In view of these developments the EU has expressed its concern over the prospect of further destabilization of the already fragile Lebanese regime.
- 25 The EU concerns for the stability of Lebanon played a major role in its past rejection of Israeli and US demand to include the Hezbollah on its list of terror organizations. These demands were strengthened following the publication of the Bulgarian investigation

report which ascribed to Hezbollah the bombing perpetrated in Burgas, Bulgaria in July 2012 against Israeli tourists.⁴⁰

- 26 However, on July 2013 The EU agreed to add the Hezbollah's military wing to the terror list but not its political faction.⁴¹ This decision resulted of Hezbollah's involvement in the Syrian civil war on behalf of the Assad regime. Israel, while expressing its satisfaction with the initiative, criticized the decision as ineffective since the political and military factions of Hezbollah are not divided. The Hezbollah itself stated that the decision had no significance for its activity.⁴²
- 27 The divergences between Israel and the EU regarding the blacklisting of the Hezbollah demonstrate that even in cases where both of them have common concerns, as in the case of the stability of Lebanon, they often diverge over the course of action regarding the issue.

Iran

- 28 Iran's nuclear project is perceived by Israel as well as by the EU, as an issue of top security importance. Indeed, both Israel and the EU perceive a nuclearized Iran as a major threat to the world's security. The EU has even initiated several rounds of severe sanctions aimed at influencing Iran to withdraw its support for this project.⁴³ The Iranian growing influence in the region, mainly through its support for Assad in Syria and Hezbollah in Lebanon, constitute another common concern of the EU and Israel. However, Israel and the EU have opposing stances concerning the use of military force as a last resort in case of the failure of the diplomatic and economic measures to stop the project. This different perception was well evident in their attitudes towards the "charm offensive" of Rouhani's, the newly elected Iranian President. Thus, while the EU has expressed its determination to seek diplomatic solution, Israel has persisted in presenting its skeptical attitudes, claiming that Iran was clearly striving to gain time in order to reach the irreversible point.⁴⁴ The EU-Israel divergence has increased due to the expressions of willingness within the EU member states to ease the sanctions on Iran, as expressed by high level British and French delegates visiting Israel on October 2013.⁴⁵ Israel's Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, manifesting skeptical attitudes regarding the Iranians' intentions, and taking seriously Iran's threats regarding Israel, urged France and Britain not to ease the sanctions until Iran abandons its nuclear project.⁴⁶ During the Geneva talks between the Iranians and P5+1 powers (the United States, France, Britain, Germany, Russia and China) coordinated by Catherine Ashton, the EU manifested its inclination to sign a deal with the Iranians which was severely criticized by Israel. A last minute French hard line, demanding the full suspension of the activity at the heavy water reactor in Arak, the downgrading of its stockpile of enriched uranium from 20 percent to 5 percent, and not recognizing Iran's right to enrich uranium, temporarily blocked the agreement with Iran.⁴⁷ However, on October 24, an interim deal was signed between the six powers and Iran, easing the sanctions on Iran in return for Iran's partial agreement to restrict its nuclear program and put it under international inspection. The EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton, praised the deal for creating time and space "for talks aimed at reaching a comprehensive solution to the dispute".⁴⁸ Israel, however, has denounced the deal as a victory to the Iranians, since they obtained the easing of the sanctions without giving any commitment regarding the dismantlement of their nuclear capabilities.⁴⁹

Israel-EU Defense Cooperation

- 29 Despite the numerous political and security divergences presented thus far, common perceptions of threats such as the Iranian nuclear program, the upheaval in the Arab world and mainly the bloodshed in Syria, the increase in the number of radical Islamic groups, international terror, the cyber war and so forth, have fostered defense and security cooperation mainly on the bilateral level with the EU member states. Defense and security cooperation between Israel and the EU is more limited, *inter alia*, since the EU as a whole has not yet succeeded to formulate and implement a significant common defense policy.⁵⁰
- 30 One aspect of defense and security cooperation is displayed in the regular strategic dialogues between Israel and the EU member states such as France, Britain and Germany. This kind of strategic dialogues involve the exchange of intelligence assessments on central geo-strategic international and regional issues.⁵¹
- 31 In 2008, the EU decided to upgrade its relations with Israel within the European Common Foreign and Security Policy-CFSP and also to organize a diplomatic-strategic dialogue between Israel and the EU.⁵² Indeed, according to Israeli Foreign office statements, Israel joined the EU's Research and Development-R&D program and has gained more access to political and defense policy committees.⁵³ In September 2010, Israel and the EU held a dialogue on weapons control and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).⁵⁴ The EU has tried to initiate an international conference on WMD designed to take place in 2013. It has stressed the urgency in creating a Middle East free of WMD in view of the upheaval in the region. However, following the Arab states proposal of a resolution at a UN nuclear agency in Vienna, which has intended to criticize Israeli "nuclear capabilities", Israel refused to participate in the conference. The US joined Israel in its criticism about the Arab tendency to single Israel out.⁵⁵
- 32 Other visible aspects of Israeli-EU security and defense relations are displayed in mutual visits of high ranking personalities⁵⁶ and through joint military training exercises such as the joint Israeli-Italian, Israeli-Greek Israeli-Polish and Israeli-Italian air force exercises in the years 2010 to 2013.⁵⁷ There were also common drills with other European state within the framework of NATO's military drills.⁵⁸
- 33 Additionally, Israel and EU member states regularly implement numerous arms deals despite the controversy that such deals occasionally stir up in the EU public opinion. For instance, France, Germany and other EU states have purchased drones from Israel since the 1990's, as Israeli drones have won a world-wide reputation for their advanced technology. The procurement of drones from Israel is motivated by military necessity, as European states only took notice of the value of drones in modern warfare long after Israel had drawn this conclusion. Consequently, many of the EU states have reached the decision that buying Israeli drones would be less costly and would provide a more promising outcome than developing them. Additional attractive factors of Israeli drones relate to Israel's practical field experience while operating drones as an effective weapon in the asymmetric battle against terrorists. Another significant attractive factor relates to Israel's willingness to sell the drones with their technology, in contrast to the US which sells military products "off the shelf" without their technologies. However, along with the procurement of Israeli drones, EU members such as France, Britain Germany, Spain, and Italy have launched research and development projects of a European Unmanned Aerial

Vehicle-UAV, which up to now have not shown the desired results. Alongside the pragmatic military considerations which push the EU members to buy Israeli drones as well as other military products such as advanced missiles, there are political pressures to withhold arms deals with Israel. For instance, the newly elected Socialist French government has decided to suspend the former administration's decision to buy advanced "Heron TP" drones from Israel. However this annulment, that was made due to variety of considerations, is seemingly not yet final.⁵⁹

- 34 Within Israeli's arms deals with the EU member states it is important to point out the six submarines deals with Germany which have a major strategic value to Israel. Three of the submarines were already provided, two other are expected during 2014 and the third in 2018.⁶⁰
- 35 It is estimated that the EU's potential of further deepening its Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) might also affect Israeli-EU defense and security cooperation. Seemingly the defense and security cooperation is relatively easier within the bilateral relations with the EU member states than within the framework of the EU. Thus, as result of the desire to display unity through unanimous votes, some member states which may have decided to negotiate arms transactions with an Israeli company, might find themselves under EU pressure to forgo these deals. However, it is also possible that the prevailing diversity among the EU member states would continue to be a dominant factor in the shaping of Israel-EU defense and security cooperation. Another option of circumventing anti-Israeli political pressure is via the relatively widespread practice of creating partnerships between Israeli companies and local EU companies. For instance, "UTac LTD", Israeli Elbit's subsidiary company, is cooperating with "Thales Britain" in a joint project of The British "Watchkeeper" drones project based on Elbit's "Hermes 450".
- 36 Another distinctive area of cooperation relates to cooperation in space. For instance, already in 1994 Israel and France signed a cooperation agreement in space projects. In the following years they cooperated inter alia in joint projects such as the satellites Amos (1-4) and Venus. Israel and the EU have also cooperated in the framework of the European Space Agency in projects such as Galileo. This cooperation became possible despite the impediments presented above due to the mutual appreciation for the advanced technologic and scientific capabilities competence of Israel and especially Israel's remarkable accomplishments in miniaturized space technologies. In addition, the enormous budgets required for accomplishing the space projects favor interstate cooperation. The civil scientific aspect of the activity in space (although the civil and the military capacities are interconnected) has probably neutralized the widespread hostile attitudes within public opinion towards military cooperation with Israel.

Conclusion

- 37 The present article has underlined the duality in Israel-EU defense and security relations. On one hand there are substantial conceptual political-strategic differences on the backdrop of the "Arab Spring", particularly regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict, which produce crises between Israel and the EU. On the other hand, there is defense and security dialogue, in particular between the EU member states and Israel, in view of the growing shared security challenges relating to the upheaval in the Arab world, Iran's nuclear threat, the global terrorism, the cyber war as well as the global economic crisis.

- 38 In fact, the shared Israel-EU concerns have not necessarily produced common policies. The EU, occasionally, tends to minimize Israel’s genuine security and defense concerns resulting of Israeli explosive and volatile geostrategic environment and the concrete threats against its very existence. On the other hand the EU appreciates the Israeli stable democracy (the only one in the region), its High-Tech industry, its advanced defense industry and its experience in the asymmetric warfare.
- 39 Finally, the defense and security cooperation, between Israel and the EU, though often discreet is significant since it also promotes channels of political dialogue and cooperation which are indispensable in view of the current upheaval in the Middle East.

NOTES

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ABSTRACTS

This article focuses on Israel-EU security and defense relations in the context of the “Arab Spring”. It displays the divergences and convergences over issues related to the “Arab Spring” such as the Israeli Palestinian conflict, the Hamas, Egypt's revolutionary events, the Syrian Civil war, Lebanon and Hezbollah and the Iranian nuclear project. It goes on to briefly highlight some main areas of defense and security cooperation which are more significant on the bilateral level between Israel and the EU member states than with the EU itself. The article emphasizes the shared strategic concerns of Israel and the EU as the major motivations behind the cooperation. It concludes with a message regarding the imperative of further political and strategic cooperation between Israel and the EU in view of a volatile and explosive geostrategic Middle East.

Cette étude porte sur les relations de défense et de sécurité entre Israël et l'Union Européenne (UE) en vue des événements du « Printemps Arabe ». Il décrit les convergences et les divergences sur les questions liées au « Printemps Arabe », comme le conflit israélo-palestinien, le Hamas, les événements révolutionnaires en Égypte, la guerre civile syrienne, le Liban, le Hezbollah et le projet nucléaire iranien. Il met ensuite en lumière les principaux domaines de la coopération de défense et de sécurité qui sont en effet plus importants sur le plan bilatéral entre Israël et les États membres de l'UE qu'avec l'UE elle-même. L'article souligne les préoccupations et les intérêts stratégiques communs d'Israël et de l'UE qui rendent la coopération politique et sécuritaire indispensable en vue d'un Moyen-Orient extrêmement instable et explosif.

INDEX

Keywords: Arab Spring, Israel, Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Hamas, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Hezbollah, Strategic dialogue, Drones, Submarines, space, European Union

Mots-clés: Printemps Arabe, Israël, Hamas, Égypte, Syrie, Liban, Hezbollah, Dialogue stratégique, Drones, Union Européenne, conflit israélo-palestinien

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